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Foggy morning: High 82, Low 56

Mueller report: No collusion

OBSTRUCTION: With the question of intent still undetermined, issue is left to Justice Department

By Rosalind S. Helderman and Josh Dawsey
WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON – Special counsel Robert Mueller's decision that he could not conclude whether President Donald Trump's attacks on the Russia investigation amounted to obstruction of justice illustrates the difficulty in proving such a charge – and left Democrats with a narrow but fraught path to press a case against Trump.

In the end, Trump's mercurial behavior and relentless attacks on the FBI and special counsel probably extended the length of the probe – but the fact that many of his eruptions were in public view also may have made it more difficult to show that he had ill intent, a key element in proving obstruction, legal experts said.

In his still-confidential report, Mueller stopped short of drawing a conclusion about whether the president obstructed justice, writing that "while this report does not conclude that the President committed a crime, it also does not exonerate him,"

Justice continues on A14

"It was a complete and total exoneration."

President Donald Trump

"While this report does not conclude that the president committed a crime, it also does not exonerate him.."

AG William Barr, quoting Mueller report

THE VERDICT: Long investigation concludes neither Trump nor aides conspired with Russia on election

By Mark Mazzetti and Katie Benner
NEW YORK TIMES

WASHINGTON – The investigation led by Robert Mueller found that neither President Donald Trump nor any of his aides conspired or coordinated with the Russian government's 2016 election interference, according to a summary of the special counsel's findings made public Sunday by Attorney General William Barr.

Mueller, who spent nearly two years investigating Moscow's determined effort to sabotage the last presidential election, found no conspiracy "despite multiple offers from Russian-affiliated individuals to assist the Trump campaign," Barr wrote in a letter to lawmakers.

The findings delivered a significant political victory for the president, one he almost immediately began to trumpet.

"It was a complete and total exoneration," Trump told reporters in Florida before boarding Air Force One. "It's a shame that our country had to go through this. To be honest, it's a shame that your president

Report continues on A14

ROAD TO THE FINAL FOUR
NCAA TOURNAMENT
MINNEAPOLIS ★ APRIL 6-8

Kansas City, here they come

Elizabeth Conley / Staff photographer

After living on Tulsa time, Nate Hinton and the Houston Cougars are going to Kansas City. UH, the No. 3 seed in the NCAA Tournament's Midwest Regional, topped Ohio State 74-59 on Sunday to advance to the Sweet 16, where the Cougars meet second-seeded Kentucky at approximately 9 p.m. Friday. Texas Tech gives the state a second school still dancing. The Red Raiders beat Buffalo 78-58 and play Michigan in a West Regional semifinal on Thursday. Story on page C1.

'So much work to be done' in Venezuela crisis

Model-turned-philanthropist hopes to make headway in homeland as she leads delegation to aid immigrants

By Dylan Baddour
CONTRIBUTOR

CÚCUTA, Colombia – Cristal Montañéz carried a box of her signature teddy bears from Houston as she led a small convoy down a Colombian highway to explore the humanitarian crisis spilling out from her homeland, Venezuela.

She spotted a crowd of young adults and children on the roadside, and she ordered the three cars in her group to pull over. A contingent of international aid workers stepped out to inspect.

Montañéz had been there before and knew the scene well. The people gathered were some of the thousands who every day flee Venezuela's collapse into hunger and chaos, setting out to cross more than 1,000 mountainous miles on foot with nothing but their bags of clothes.

Children lit up and giggled as Montañéz handed them stuffed animals.

"The bears are just magic," she said in Spanish, forcing a weak smile, though her eyes still bore the grief that weighed on her. "They can bring out happiness even at times of such tragedy."

The convoy continued on. They were there to evaluate a project launched by a Houston Rotary club, designed to feed

Aid continues on A12

Late official's coffers still hold millions

Lee's widow may sway 2020 with war chest, even after his death

By Zach Despart
STAFF WRITER

The politician with the largest campaign account in Houston and Harris County – excluding self-funded mayoral candidate Tony Buzbee – has $3.6 million on hand. That exceeds the combined sums of Houston's incumbent mayor and the Harris County judge, and all but ensures this official would be better-funded than any challenger.

He has little use for it, however, because he has been dead for three years.

When 66-year-old Precinct 1 Commissioner El Franco Lee had a fatal heart attack in January 2016, his campaign account had $3.8 million. Since then, the cash has been managed by Ethel Kaye Lee, the late commissioner's widow and campaign treasurer. Lee has invested much of the sum in securities, growing the fund at times to more than $4 million. Under Texas law, she has until 2022 to close the account.

Incumbent politicians often leave unspent campaign funds when they lose elections or die in office, but the size of Lee's account three years after his passing presents a peculiar case: Ethel Kaye Lee has the sole discretion to spend the fund, potentially making her one of the most powerful donors in Texas heading

Funds continues on A13

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